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The situated production of stories

DAVID GREATBATCH AND TIMOTHY CLARK

Introduction

At a general level storytelling is a pervasive feature of everyday discourse both within and outside organisations. Existing research on organisational stories indicates that they are not simply frivolous diversions that seek to amaze and entertain the recipients. Rather they may serve a number of important functions for organisations, which include socialising new organisational members by articulating the culture of an organisation; assisting with the development and verbalisation of visions and strategies; helping develop points of similarity within disparate and dispersed organisational groups; sustaining and legitimating existing power relationships as well as providing opportunities for resistance against them; and acting as collective organisational memory systems (Boje 1991, 1995, 2001; Boyce 1995; B. Clark 1972; Gabriel 1991, 1995; Moeran 2007; Mumby 1987; Wilkins 1983).

Whilst previous studies have produced important insights into various aspects of storytelling within organisations, a common failing has been their focus on the analysis of textual recordings of stories rather than an examination of their *in situ* production. It has generally been assumed that a story's original meaning and purpose, as conveyed when it was initially told, is apparent from an analysis of a textual record of this event. With notable exceptions (e.g. Boje 1991, 1995, 2001), storytelling has not been viewed as a situated communicative act. This is surprising given that, as David Boje (2001) demonstrates, studying storytelling episodes as situated communicative acts, which are shaped not only by storytellers but also by story recipients, is critical to understanding their form, function and reception.

In this chapter we show how conversation analysis can be used to study storytelling as a situated communicative act and to shed light on how the performative impact of stories may vary significantly when they are told on different occasions. This involves a comparative

analysis of two storytelling episodes in which a speaker tells the same story to two different audiences. The speaker, Daniel Goleman, is a highly successful presenter on the international management lecture circuit and one of an elite group of management speakers referred to as management gurus. Management gurus are purveyors of influential management ideas such as ‘excellence’, ‘culture change’, ‘learning organisation’, ‘business process re-engineering’ and, in the case of Daniel Goleman, ‘emotional intelligence’. In addition to writing best-selling management books they disseminate their ideas in live presentations to audiences of managers around the world (Huczynski 1993; Jackson 2001; T. Clark and Salaman 1996, 1998). As perhaps the highest-profile group of management speakers in the world, they use their lectures to build their personal reputations with audiences of managers. Many gain reputations as powerful orators and subsequently market recordings of their talks as parts of audio- and DVD/web-based management training packages. A key element of their success is seen as the stories they tell (T. Clark and Salaman 1998; Huczynski 1993). Stories therefore help build and sustain their reputations with audiences well beyond the initial popularity of a book.

The storytelling episodes analysed in the present chapter are drawn from two commercially available video recordings of lectures given by Goleman. The chapter begins with a brief review of the literature on storytelling in organisations. It then shows, through a comparative analysis of two occasions on which Goleman tells the same story, how stories are shaped with respect to and by the interaction between the speakers and audience members and how their meaning and performative impact may vary significantly when they are told on different occasions. The analysis builds on our previous conversation analytic research on speaker–audience interaction in the context of both management and political oratory (Greatbatch and Clark 2002, 2003, 2005; Heritage and Greatbatch 1986). The chapter concludes by drawing out some of the theoretical, methodological and substantive implications of this approach for research on stories in management and organisation studies.

Storytelling as a communicative act

A review of the literature indicates that researchers have adopted a variety of approaches when collecting organisational stories. Some

studies have searched for examples of organisational stories in the academic literature and historical accounts of organisations (B. Clark 1972; Martin *et al.* 1983; Mumby 1987). Others have tape recorded conversations and interactions in a number of formal and informal contexts within organisations in conjunction with notes derived from participant observation (Boje 1991; Gabriel 1995; Smart 1999). Further methods have included experiments (Martin and Powers 1983) and surveys (McConkie and Boss 1986; Wilkins 1984). Finally, a number of researchers, in addition to collecting stories from a range of documentary sources, have used unstructured interviews in order to identify stories that are circulating within a variety of different types of organisations (Gabriel 1995, 2000; Moeran 2007; Wilkins 1983).

However, regardless of the approach adopted, Boje (1991, 1995, 2001), drawing on the earlier critique of the anthropological and folklorist story literature by Robert Georges (1969, 1980), has argued that studies of storytelling within organisations have adopted what he terms the ‘stories-as-texts paradigm’. Whether the research has been extensive or intensive, based on surveys, experimental methods, questionnaires, interviews or archival/documentary research, stories have been treated as objective data disconnected from their original telling. They are viewed as nothing more than texts with little attention given to the natural context in which the stories are told. Consequently, as Boje (1991: 109) notes, ‘the textual content, rather than the storytelling event, is the focus of study’. Drawing on arguments from the folklore literature, the point he makes is that the full meaning of a story is assumed to be discernable from a detailed analysis of a textual record of the words used by the teller. However, he argues, this fails to include a number of elements that combine to create a storytelling performance and ignores the active influence of the recipients. This point is well captured by Georges (1969: 316) when he writes of the dominant folklorist approach to collecting stories that ‘these texts constitute nothing more than a written representation of one aspect of the message of complex communicative events’. So, when stories are treated as texts they are disembodied from their original telling within the specific context and organisation, with the consequence that their significance as performed entities is lost. Thus, without examining storytelling in its natural context we cannot be certain how the specific characters, plot elements, narrative structure and emphasis work separately and in conjunction with one another to underpin the achievement of the telling of the story.

Even when stories are collected through ethnographic methods involving conversations, such as in formal and informal interviews, researchers do not regard this as a particular storytelling event that differs from that within the organisation. Rather the performative contexts of the interview and the organisation are treated as identical. Yet, as Yiannis Gabriel (1995: 496) argues, the nature of a story is modified through repeated tellings in that at each telling 'some elements are discarded, others are incorporated or elaborated ... each text may then travel, undergoing further elaborations with each recital'. Nevertheless, the underlying assumption in much prior research of organisational storytelling is that the informant is reproducing as precisely as they are able a story that they may have previously recounted to their organisational colleagues or heard told. Again this criticism mirrors that made by Georges when he writes with respect to folklorist research, 'Most researchers tend to regard storytellers as carriers of specific stories or kinds of stories and conceive the principal duty of the storyteller as reproducing or re-creating, as "accurately" as possible, individual stories he has heard from others, while those who hear these stories from him will in turn "pass them on", again, as "accurately" as possible, to others.' From this point of view researchers of organisational stories similarly view interviewees/informants/storytellers as having a special ability to 'reproduce or recreate [a story], insofar as is possible, with word-for-word consistency from telling to telling' (Georges 1969: 323). Despite Yiannis Gabriel's (1995) point that stories vary in important ways from one telling to another, stories are assumed to have an unchanging quality regardless of the specific context within which they are told.

This approach in turn assumes that the mode of communication adopted by the storyteller is that of sender and that of the audience is passive recipient. Storytellers and audiences do not therefore actively participate and so mutually influence the telling of an unfolding story.

However, given the situated production of stories it cannot be assumed that the same story is told in an identical way to different audiences. This latter observation echoes with Gail Jefferson's (1978: 219) argument that 'stories are sequenced objects articulating with the particular context in which they are told. For example, storytelling can involve a story preface in which the teller projects a forthcoming story, a next turn in which a co-participant aligns themselves as a story recipient, a next in which the teller produces a story, and a next in which the

story recipient talks by reference to the story.’ Given that in conversations stories emerge from turn-by-turn talk, informants may select one story from a range of possible alternatives and adjust their rendition by emphasising certain features over others to meet the locally occasioned circumstances of the research interview (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1975). Furthermore, whether the researcher is aware of it or not, their own verbal and non-verbal reactions to the unfolding story will influence any particular rendition.

In this chapter, we demonstrate the importance of studying storytelling as a real-time communicative act by comparing two storytelling episodes in which the management speaker Daniel Goleman recounts the same story to different audiences during lectures given on the management lecture circuit in the United States. Using the approach and findings of conversation analytic studies of storytelling in talk-in-interaction (e.g. C. Goodwin 1984; Jefferson 1978; Sacks 1974, 1992), we track each storytelling episode as it unfolds in real time. Our analysis exemplifies the problems with the ‘stories-as-texts’ paradigm in two interrelated ways. First, it shows how the same story is presented and interpreted in different ways in the two lectures, even though the wording is very similar. Secondly, it shows how the meaning and significance of the story are negotiated between the storyteller and story recipients on a moment-by-moment basis as the storytelling episodes unfold, and how paralinguistic and kinesic cues, which are rarely, if ever, considered in storytelling research in organisation studies (Boje 1991, 2001), play a key role in this process.

Analysis

Daniel Goleman is the author of the best-selling book titled *Emotional Intelligence* (1996). This spent over a year on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Prior to that he was a science journalist and wrote for publications such as the *New York Times*. On the basis of the success of *Emotional Intelligence* he has become a frequent and highly regarded speaker on the international management lecture circuit. The story that is focus of our analysis is told on two different occasions. The first telling, in Lecture 1 (‘Emotional Intelligence: A Cornerstone of Learning Communities’), occurs in a dimly lit conference centre. Goleman speaks for just over fifty minutes to an audience of more than a hundred people from behind a podium. Occasionally he moves

away from the podium but never in front of it. The second telling, in Lecture 2, occurs a year or two later during a seventy-five minute speech ('Emotional Intelligence') to an audience of around a hundred people. The audience sits on a tiered structure arranged in a horseshoe shape. Goleman is able to wander the floor in full view, without any obstacles between the audience and himself. The setting is much brighter and more intimate and has a colourful backdrop. Apart from the nature of the auditorium and audience, a critical difference between these two lectures is Goleman's appearance. In the first lecture he is heavily bearded and wears glasses. In the second lecture he has trimmed his beard and does not wear glasses. The importance of this difference will become apparent when we discuss the analysis of the two tellings.

The story concerns Goleman's experience(s) on catching a bus in New York. Goleman depicts the bus driver's actions as exemplifying emotional intelligence in that he succeeded in energising passengers who were initially irritable and unsociable due, in part, to the hot weather. As Table 5.1 shows, the two renditions of the story are very similar in terms of both their structure and wording.

In each lecture Goleman tells the story, positively assesses the central character and then goes on to discuss the element of emotional intelligence that the story exemplifies. However, Goleman contextualises the

Table 5.1. A comparison between the text of two versions of the same story

Lecture 1	Lecture 2
Preamble	Preamble
The last element the fifth part of emotional intelligence is social skill which in a sense means handling emotions in relationships. Handling emotions in the other person. Well if you're really skilled that's what you're doing.	You see emotions are contagious. Emotions pass between us as part of every interaction. People who are really adept at social skill they know this. They use it, and they think better.
Story preface	Story preface
None	Now I am going to tell you the story that changed my life. It showed me that we are all part of each other's emotional toolkit (.) for better or for worse.

Table 5.1. (cont.)

Lecture 1	Lecture 2
Story	Story
I was once waiting for a bus on a hot horrible August day in Manhattan. The kind of day when it's so humid and awful and yucky that everybody's going round in a bubble like don't look at me, don't talk to me, don't touch me.	It was a really hot horrible, humid day in New York city, and everybody's walking around in a kinda of a bubble that says don't touch me, don't talk to me (Very light audience laughter) you know. Leave me alone I'm a little prickly and irritable today.
And I was standing there in my bubble waiting for the bus and the bus pulled up and I got on bubble intact. And the bus driver did something surprising. He spoke to me. He actually spoke to me. He said hi how are you doing. I was taken aback.	And I'm waiting for the bus with my bubble intact, (Isolated audience laughter) and it pulls up and I get on careful to bring my bubble with me and the bus driver does something really surprising. He talks to me. (Isolated audience laughter) He says hi how are you doing? It's great to have you on the bus. He really means it. (Isolated audience laughter) I'm shocked. (Light audience laughter)
And I sat down, and I realised that this bus driver was carrying on a dialogue with everybody on the bus. Oh you're looking for suits are yuh, well you know there's a great sale in this department store up here on the right, and did you hear about the movies in the centreplex here on the left, the one in cinema one isn't very good. I know it got good reviews but cinema three that's really good. And did you hear about what's opening up in this museum up here on the right. On and on and on like that.	I sit down and all of a sudden I realise this guy's carrying on a dialogue with the whole bus. Oh you're looking for suits are you. You know this department store down here on the right it's got a great sale on suits you should check it out. (Isolated audience laughter) Hey did you hear about this great Picasso show at the museum down here. On and on and on.

Table 5.1. (*cont.*)

Lecture 1	Lecture 2
And people would get off that bus and he'd say well so long it's been great having you. And they'd say yeah it's been great being on this bus. (Isolated audience laughter).	People'd get off the bus and he'd say so long it's been great having you (Isolated audience laughter) And they'd say it's been great being on this bus. (Audience laughter)
Storyteller's assessment	Storyteller's assessment
That man was an urban saint. (Audience laughter)	That man that man was an urban saint, (Isolated audience laughter) He was sending ripples of good feeling throughout the city.
Key lesson	Key lesson
You see (.) emotions are contagious. There is a hidden emotional economy that passes amongst us all, it's part of every interaction.	When I saw him I realised that we all have this power to make each other feel better or worse. And we have this power no matter what we do because it's how we do it that makes the difference

story in different ways in the two lectures. In the first lecture he uses the story to illustrate the fifth element of emotional intelligence, social skills, which he defines as handling emotions in relationships. In the second lecture, however, Goleman presents the story as depicting an event that changed his life. Here, then, the story is afforded significantly more importance than in the previous lecture. Whereas in the first lecture it was presented as an illustration, on this occasion it is presented as an account of an epiphanic experience, which was central to Goleman becoming an advocate of the theory of emotional intelligence.

Although the story is contextualised in different ways, the structure and wording of the two renditions are very similar. It is therefore noticeable that the audience responses in the two lectures differ in important respects. In Lecture 1 the audience listens in silence until the completion of the story, at which point a handful of people laugh in response to Goleman's description of the exchanges between the bus driver and his passengers. Then, following Goleman's post-story characterisation of the bus driver as an urban saint, a large number of audience members laugh out loud. The audience reactions to the story

in Lecture 2 differ markedly from this. Here the conclusion of the story evokes collective audience laughter, whereas Goleman's characterisation of the bus driver as an urban saint evokes only isolated laughter – precisely the reverse of the situation when the story was told in the earlier lecture. Notice also that earlier components of the story evoke either laughter or isolated laughter, whereas before this was not the case. These differences result from the different ways in which Goleman relates the story paralinguistically and kinesically in the two storytelling episodes. Space considerations mean that it is not possible to look in detail at every aspect of this, so we will concentrate on the end of the story, as this is key to understanding its function on these particular occasions.

The extracts in Table 5.1 comprise decontextualised transcripts of the two renditions of the story, which are akin to the data used in many management studies of storytelling. In order to explain the different reactions of the audience members, however, it is necessary to consider the storyteller's paralinguistic and visual actions as his two renditions of the story unfold in real time.

Lecture 1

As Extract 5.1 shows, Goleman's reactions to the episodes of audience laughter that follow his story and his subsequent assessment of the central character differ.

Extract 5.1 [EI: 0.40.00]

- 1 Gol: hh On and on and on like that. .hh And people
- 2 would get off that bus (.) and he'd say well so
- 3 long it's been great having you. =And they'd say
- 4 yea:h it's been great being on this bus.
- 5 (.)
- 6 Aud: h-h [-h-h h hh [h - h
- 7 Gol: [That ma:n [was an urban saint.
- 8 [Smile face->
- 9 (.) Smiles
- 10 Aud: hhhhhhhhhh hhhhhhhhhh hhhhhhhh- [h h-h
- 11 Gol: [You see (.)
- 12 emotions are contagious. (1.4) There is a <hidde:n
- 13 emo:tional economy> that passes (.) amongst us
- 14 all:, =it's part of every interaction

Thus note that Goleman does not confirm the relevance of the isolated audience laughter which follows his story by ceding the floor. Instead he almost immediately proceeds to characterise the bus driver as an 'urban saint'. However, Goleman *does* confirm the relevance of the laughter which follows this assessment of the bus driver by remaining silent until this laughter starts to die away, at which point he starts to elaborate the aspect of emotional intelligence that the story has been used to exemplify.

Further light can be shed on this storytelling episode by considering Goleman's visual conduct as he concludes his story and then characterises the central character as an urban saint. This reveals that Goleman's non-verbal actions operate to emphasise his assessment of the bus driver's actions, rather than the story itself. They also illustrate how Goleman recounts the story without any indication that it is intendedly humorous. He does not announce that it is a humorous story, smile or use comedic/incongruous paralinguistic cues or gestures, all actions that are routinely associated with the delivery of humorous messages (Greatbatch and Clark 2003, 2005).

As Goleman describes the exchange between the passengers and the bus driver, he holds his arm out to the right, as his voice trails off to almost a whisper (Figures 5.1a and 5.1b). Neither his speech delivery nor his bodily actions suggest that some form of collective response from the audience would be appropriate at this point. On the contrary, both his tone of voice and his outstretched arm gesture indicate that he has yet to complete the current unit of his talk.

However, as Figures 5.1c–5.1f show, as soon as he begins to characterise the driver as an urban saint, Goleman's vocal and non-vocal actions combine to emphasise his message and thereby to make it stand out from the preceding speech materials. In addition to speaking more loudly and forcibly, Goleman forms his fingers into a pointing action (Figure 5.1c). He then rotates his arm and thrusts his outstretched finger(s) towards the audience (Figure 5.1d). Subsequently, Goleman lowers his arm so that by the time he completes his sentence he is pointing at the floor (Figures 5.1e and 5.1f).

Thus Goleman's tone and rhythmic delivery, together with his gestures, serve to mark out his characterisation of the bus driver as an urban saint as the punch line of the preceding story. It is his post-story



And they'd say
yea:h it's
been great

Figure 5.1a



being on this bus.

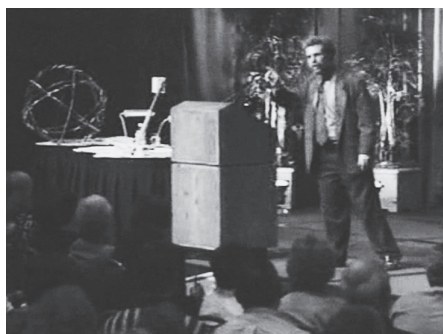
Figure 5.1b



That man
(Isolated audience
laughter)

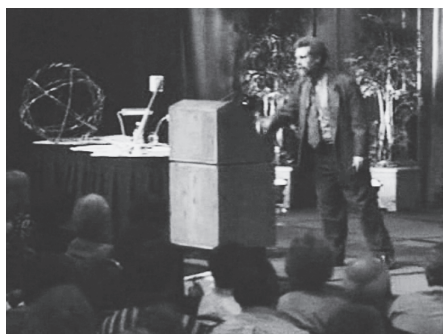
Figure 5.1c

assessment rather than the story per se that he emphasises both vocally and non-vocally, and which he delivers as his key message in this segment of the lecture. Moreover, in contrast to the preceding talk, Goleman's facial expression and paralinguistic actions are also consistent with the delivery of a humorous message, for he adopts a 'smile



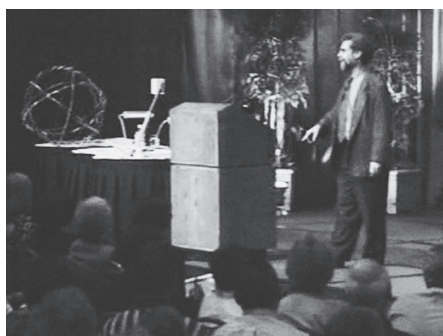
was an

Figure 5.1d



urban

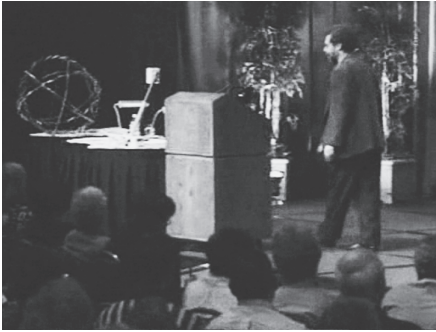
Figure 5.1e



Saint.

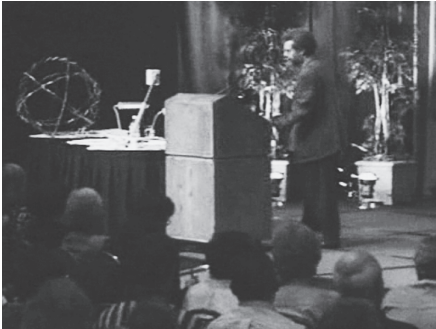
Figure 5.1f

face’ – characterised by the upper lip being drawn back and the corners of the mouth raised slightly, a slight puffing of the cheeks, brightening of the eyes and creases under the eyes (Pollio, Mers and Lucchesi 1972) – and a ‘smile voice’ – characterised by a noticeable increase in the frequency and pitch of the speech (Shor 1978; Tartter 1989), which



Audience laughter

Figure 5.1g



Audience laughter

Figure 5.1h

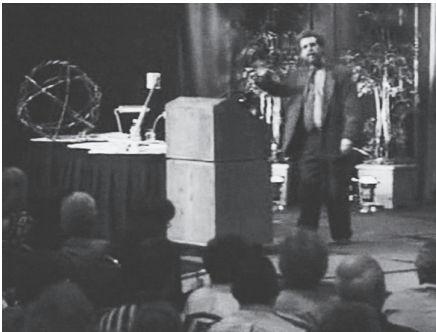
You see
emotions are
contagious...

Figure 5.1i

imbues his talk with a ‘cheery resonance’ (Lavin and Maynard 2001: 467). Goleman also broadens his smile as he falls silent following the post-story assessment.

As can be seen in Figures 5.1g–5.1i, Goleman confirms the relevance of audience laughter not only by ceding the floor/remaining silent until the laughter starts to die away but also through his bodily actions. As

the audience members laugh, Goleman turns away from them, walks to the lectern and glances at his notes (Figures 5.1g and 5.1h).

Then, as the audience laughter fades, he turns back towards the audience members, raises his arm and points towards them as he starts to distil out the key lesson of the story (Figure 5.1i).

In this case, then, Goleman uses the story as an example of the fifth aspect of emotional intelligence. He delivers the story in a 'serious' frame before shifting to a humorous frame and evoking laughter as he delivers a positive assessment of the bus driver's actions.

Lecture 2

By the time of the second lecture Goleman was no longer wearing spectacles and had trimmed his beard. These are significant changes to his facial appearance because they meant that the audience members would be able to see his eyes and mouth more clearly than in the past; consequently his facial expressions would be more clearly visible than on previous occasions. This was perhaps linked to the fact that Goleman had also honed his style of public speaking, adopting a much more energised, animated, forceful and vital style of public speaking than in his previous lecture, including the use of more pronounced facial expressions.

As noted earlier, in this lecture the conclusion to the story evokes collective audience laughter, whereas the assessment of the bus driver evokes only isolated laughter – the reverse of what happened in Lecture 1. As Extract 5.2 shows, Goleman treats the occurrence of laughter following the story as relevant by pausing until the laughter starts to die away.

Extract 5.2 [EI2 – 30:16]

- 1 Gol: On and on and on. (0.3) People'd get
- 2 off the bus (.) and he'd say so long
- 3 it's been great having you
- 4 Aud: h-h-[hh h-h=
- 5 Gol: [And they'd say it's been great being on this bus.
- 6 Aud: hhhhhhhh [h-h- h- h h h
- 7 Gol: [That man that man was an urban saint?
- 8 Aud: h-h-h-h- [h-h
- 9 Gol: [He was sending ripples of good feeling

10 throughout the city. (0.6) When I saw him (.)
 11 I realised that we all have this power (0.2) to make
 12 each other feel better or worse. (0.2) And we have
 13 this power no matter what we do (.) because it's how
 14 we do it that makes the difference

As can be seen, the wording of the conclusion of the story and the subsequent assessment of the bus driver are virtually identical in the two lectures. What is key to understanding the delivery of the story on this occasion is the way in which Goleman shifts the emphases that he places on different elements of the storytelling episode. In this case, he places much greater emphasis than before on the concluding element of the story. Rather than channelling audience attention towards his characterisation of the bus driver as an urban saint, he presents the end of the story as a focal assertion and succeeds in evoking collective audience laughter in response to it.

Consider Figures 5.2a–5.2e. In contrast to the first lecture, Goleman both highlights his depiction of the way in which passengers in the story responded to the bus driver as they got off the bus ('And they'd say it's been great being on this bus') and projects the relevance of audience laughter upon its completion. Thus, as he begins to quote the passengers, he leans towards the audience, arms at his side (Figure 5.1a). Then, he lifts up both forearms before thrusting his hands downwards as he says 'great' (Figure 5.2b). As he completes the paraphrase he lowers his hands (Figure 5.2c) so that by the end of the story they are at his side, as he stands smiling at the audience (Figure 5.2d). Together with his animated tone, these actions not only convey the nature of the passenger's reactions to the bus driver, but also imbue the story with a more humorous tone than was the case in the first lecture. As the audience members laugh, he stands, relaxed, arms at his side, smiling at them without speaking and giving no indication that a resumption of his speaking is imminent, thereby confirming the relevance of the laughter (Figures 5.2d and 5.2e). Then, as can be seen in Figures 5.2f–5.2i, as the audience laughter starts to fade, he leans forward slightly towards the audience, thrusts out his left leg towards them, lifts his forearms to chest level, and cups his hands as he characterises the bus driver as an urban saint.



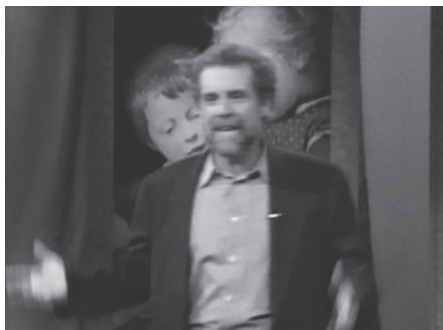
And they'd
say yeah

Figure 5.2a



it's been great

Figure 5.2b



being

Figure 5.2c

Goleman's paralinguistic and visual conduct, as he characterises the bus driver as an urban saint, differs from the first lecture in two important respects. First, in contrast to the first lecture, as he completes this post-story assessment of the bus driver, Goleman's paralinguistic and visual conduct does not suggest that completion of the post-story assessment will also represent completion of the message he is in the process of



on this bus.
You know.

Figure 5.2d



Audience laughter

Figure 5.2e



That ma:n

Figure 5.2f

delivering. Thus, whereas in Lecture 1 his gestures were consistent with message completion (recall how he lowered an outstretched arm/finger so that by the time he completed the post-story assessment he was pointing at the floor), in this case Goleman stands poised to continue speaking. Moreover, whereas in the first lecture he voiced his assessment with falling intonation, on this occasion he delivers the assessment



that man was
an urban

Figure 5.2g



Saint?

Figure 5.2h



Isolated audience
laughter

Figure 5.2i

with rising intonation. This suggests that further talk may be imminent and that the message-in-progress is yet to be completed.

The second difference between the two renditions of the post-story assessment of the bus driver is that in Lecture 2 Goleman does not signal humorous intent by smiling and, although a handful of audience members do laugh, the overwhelming majority remain silent. Moreover, in

contrast to the first lecture, Goleman subsequently gives no indication whatsoever that laughter is a relevant response at this juncture. Instead, he proceeds almost immediately to explain *why* the driver was an urban saint and how the driver's actions provided him with a revelatory insight into the importance of so-called emotional intelligence. Thus, Goleman does not present his post-story characterisation of the bus driver as an urban saint as the humorous punch line of the story, as was the case in his previous lecture; instead he embeds it in a 'serious' account of the lesson he learnt from the events he described in his story.

In summary, Goleman's paralinguistic and visual actions serve to formulate the story and post-story assessment in very different ways in the two lectures. In the first lecture, Goleman channels the audience's attention towards, and evokes audience laughter in response to, his post-story characterisation of the bus driver as an urban saint. However, in the second lecture he adopts a different tack. Specifically, he invites (and subsequently confirms the relevance of) collective audience laughter in response to the final element of the story, before shifting to a 'serious' footing as he depicts the bus driver as an urban saint during the course of delivering a broader message which (1) contextualises the driver's actions in terms of the theory of emotional intelligence and (2) identifies the wider impact the driver's actions had on his own thinking. In other words, it is the story itself that is framed as humorous, rather than the storyteller's post-story assessment of the central character's actions. Thus, in the first case, the story is embedded in an argument structure in which it is positioned as a prefatory component preceding a punch line, which comprises the storyteller's assessment of the central character's actions; in the second case the final element of the story itself is formulated as the punch line, while the post-story assessment of the driver's actions is embedded within a 'non-humorously' formatted message which distils the lesson to be learnt from the story.

These differences in Goleman's paralinguistic and visual conduct are due at least in part to the fact that he uses the same story in different ways in the two lectures. In the first lecture, Goleman uses the story merely to illustrate a dimension of emotional intelligence, whereas in the second lecture he presents the story as depicting an epiphanic moment in his life. This is a significant shift in emphasis, with the story now being presented as leading to his 'conversion' to the set of ideas concerning emotional intelligence that he is conveying to this audience. The story is no longer just an example; it is an account of a life-changing revelatory

experience. By presenting the final element in the story as a punch line, and inviting audience laughter at that point, Goleman highlights and emphasises the remarkable quality of the incident (Greatbatch and Clark 2002, 2003, 2005). He also imbues the events depicted in the story with more significance than was the case in the previous lecture because on this occasion he does not channel the audience's attention towards his post-story assessment of the bus driver. Goleman's vocal and non-vocal actions thus place greater emphasis on the actions of the bus driver and his passengers than was the case in the previous lecture. This perhaps serves to underline the epiphanic aspects of the storytelling episode in this lecture. The performance-based aspects of the storytelling episodes are thus key to understanding the specific functions of Goleman's 'urban saint' story when he recounts it in the two lectures.

Discussion

Despite Boje's (1991) cogent critique, the 'story-as-texts' approach continues as a major stream in storytelling research in organisational studies. Thus, for example, recent studies of storytelling within organisations have adopted such an approach, drawing on stories gleaned in interviews and participant observation (e.g. Gabriel 1995, 2000; Moeran 2007). Our analysis of Goleman's rendition of the same story on two different occasions underlines the problems with the 'stories-as-texts' paradigm, which treats stories as entities removed from their performative context and which conceptualises storytelling as a process in which the meaning is fixed (by the teller) and remains relatively stable and static across tellings. A decontextualised transcript of a story may give a very different impression of the production and reception it received from the audience when told live. As we have seen, a story (or component of a story) that looks serious on paper may receive a humorous response from members of an audience or vice versa. Moreover, the same story may be used and interpreted in different ways on different occasions. The performance-based aspects of storytelling episodes – especially paralinguistic and visual cues – are thus key in relation to understanding the functions of stories. We cannot therefore assume that the nature of the events recounted in a story has a fixed and final significance. Stories may be presented, interpreted and received in different ways, even though the wording may be very similar or even identical.

In addition to illustrating the importance of paralinguistic and kinesic actions in storytelling episodes, this chapter also shows how stories emerge through a process of interaction between storytellers and story recipients. The literature on storytelling in organisation studies as a whole fails to systematically examine the impact of storyteller/recipient interaction on story content, delivery and function. Thus, for example, little if any consideration is given to how the delivery and content of stories are shaped in response to the immediate reactions of recipients, or how storytellers elicit displays of approval from recipients, or how recipients' reactions are evoked, co-ordinated and managed. Even those studies that have focused on audio/video recordings of real-world storytelling episodes have overlooked storyteller/recipient interaction, involving instead either textual analysis of decontextualised transcripts or speaker-focused analyses, which do not consider how stories unfold in real time and emerge out of a process of interaction between storytellers and recipients (e.g. Greatbatch and Clark 2003, 2005).

In this chapter we have illustrated how stories are embedded within and arise out of interactions between speakers and listeners, and how this is key to understanding the significance and *in situ* meaning of stories, the extent storytellers and recipients display shared understandings of stories, when and where story recipients respond and so on. Thus, for example, our analysis of the storytelling episodes involving Goleman underlines that collective laughter is not simply a spontaneous reaction to stories whose content is self-evidently humorous, but rather is often evoked by storytellers through the use of a range of verbal and non-verbal practices. By varying his visual and paralinguistic conduct, Goleman stresses and invites collective laughter in response to different components in the two storytelling episodes. Goleman's paralinguistic and visual actions do not merely embellish and enliven his narration of the story; they are key to establishing the story's *in situ* meaning and significance, and projecting and co-ordinating appropriate collective audience responses on each occasion. Furthermore, what our analysis indicates is that whether a story is good, bad, successful or unsuccessful is not due to a number of essential and stable ingredients (Gabriel 2000; Taylor, Fisher and Dufresne 2002). Rather the various elements that combine to create the 'aesthetic experience' (Taylor, Fisher and Dufresne 2002) and underpin any subsequent evaluation of a story are themselves *in situ* accomplishments. As we have shown, differences in the use of paralinguistic and kinesic cues influence the immediate

reception of a story and may therefore influence any future views as to its effectiveness.

Considering the interactional dimensions of storytelling also reveals the importance of story recipients' conduct during the course of storytelling episodes, and the ways in which stories represent joint accomplishments, involving both storytellers and story recipients. In the cases considered in this chapter, audience members are not passive recipients of a story whose meaning is straightforwardly determined and transmitted to them by the storyteller. This becomes especially apparent when we consider how audience members display competing understandings of the urban saint story and Goleman's post-story assessment of the bus driver's actions, and how the storyteller subsequently tacitly accepts some displayed understandings but not others. In the first lecture, only a handful of audience members laugh upon completion of the story, whereas most, if not all, laugh following the storyteller's subsequent assessment of the central character. While the storyteller (Goleman) tacitly disconfirms the relevance of the isolated laughter following the story by proceeding immediately to produce the assessment, he tacitly confirms the relevance of laughter following the post-story assessment by ceding the floor until the laughter starts to die away. In the second case, most audience members laugh following the story, whereas only a few laugh following the storyteller's post-story assessment. Here, in contrast to the first lecture, the storyteller treats the occurrence of audience laughter following the story as relevant, by ceding the floor, but tacitly disconfirms the relevance of laughter following the post-story assessment by continuing to speak after the first few beats of laughter (rather than, for example, remaining silent in expectation that the isolated laughter will lead to full laughter). All of this occurs in real time, as the story emerges out of the moment-by-moment actions and reactions of the storyteller and story recipients on two separate occasions. The status of the story and the post-story assessment as humorous or non-humorous is negotiated *in situ* and is not embodied in the words used by the speaker. The completion of the story and the post-story assessment involve the use of almost identical wording on the two occasions, with the differing interpretive frameworks and reactions resting on the storyteller's use of different paralinguistic and visual cues.

The key message of this chapter is that the nature, meaning and significance of stories (and specific incidents within them) are achieved *in situ* and that paralinguistic and visual cues play an important role in

this process. Approaches that analyse stories using decontextualised transcripts are therefore misconceived. It is only by studying stories in natural contexts, as they emerge in real-time interactions between story-tellers and story recipients, that we can grasp their roles and significance in organisational (and other) settings. Conversation analysis is ideally suited to this task of studying stories as joint accomplishments in naturally occurring talk-in-interaction.